



## Nonnative Species: Changes in Latitude?



kudzu, a nonnative species



Science  
You Can  
Use!

# Nonnative Species: Changes in Latitude?

## Why Should You Care About the Latitudinal Range of Nonnative Species?

Nonnative plant and animal species live in areas where they are not naturally found. Naturalized species compete with native species for food, water, sunlight, space, and other resources. A nonnative species becomes naturalized by successfully competing with native species. Successful competition can cause harm to native species and can change the native ecosystem. Changes to native ecosystems can cause unexpected impacts to the natural resources upon which humans have come to depend.

## Did You Know?

Global transportation patterns have accelerated the movement of nonnative plant and animal species worldwide. Most of these species have moved to new areas by mistake, although people have also purposefully contributed to the worldwide distribution of nonnative species. Species usually live in areas of similar latitude across the globe. Scientists have found, however, that nonnative species' latitudinal range has moved slightly northward as the climate warms.

## What Are Scientists Doing to Help?

Scientists are studying existing databases and tracking nonnative species so that they can identify the latitudinal range of these species and compare it with their native ranges. As scientists learn how nonnative ranges compare with native ranges, they can better predict how the ranges of nonnative species will spread in the future. This information helps natural resource managers to more successfully manage habitat for native species, and to improve these species' chances for healthy future populations.

## Take Action!

Plant native species around your home or school. Some nonnative species can harm native species by successfully competing with them for resources.

Never release a nonnative animal species into the wild.

Read "North of the Border" in the *Natural Inquirer* Southern Climate Change edition, <http://www.naturalinquirer.org>.



November 2013

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